

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6448

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 0105

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CI, UK

SUBJ: GOC REJECTS ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE BY DR. CASSIDY

REFS: (A) LONDON 19897 (B) 75 SANTIAGO 8742

1. SUMMARY: GOC HAS CATEGORICALLY REJECTED TORTURE CHARGES MADE BY BRITISH SUBJECT SHEILA CASSIDY IN PUBLIC STATEMENT BY INTERIOR MINISTRY JANUARY 2 AND IN FOREIGN MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN MADE PUBLIC JANUARY 6. END SUMMARY.

2. INTERIOR STATEMENT EXPRESSED "SURPRISE AND DISPLEASURE" OVER CASSIDY ALLEGATIONS. SAID UK EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES HAD VISITED CASSIDY WHILE DETAINED AND HAD BEEN ABLE TO SPEAK FREELY WITH HER. MOREOVER, CASSIDY ALSO HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM THE LEGAL AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATING HER CASE OF ANY MISTREATMENT, BUT NO MENTION OF TORTURE HAD BEEN MADE BY CASSIDY OR UK REPRESENTATIVES.

3. IN FIRST PERSON NOTE, FON MINISTER CARVAJAL REJECTED ALLEGATION CONTAINED IN FON SECRETARY CALLAGHAN'S MESSAGE THAT CASIDY HAD BEEN TORTURED ON EVENING OF NOVEMBER 1 AND FOLLOWING DAY. NOTE CALLED ALLEGATION "UNFOUNDED AND MALICIOUS" NOTING UK REPRESENTATIVES' STATEMENTS
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REPORTED IN "DAILY TELEGRAPH" NOVEMBER 8 AND NOVEMBER 20,

AND REUTER AGENCY LONDON DESPATCHES NOVEMBER 9 WHICH INDICATED THAT THEY HAD FOUND CASSIDY IN GOOD HEALTH WITH NO SIGNS OF TORTURE. NOTE ALSO REFERRED TO STATEMENTS SIGNED BY CASSIDY ON NOVEMBER 11 AND NOVEMBER 24 THAT SHE HAD NOT BEEN MISTREATED.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER'S NOTE STATED CASSIDY HAD BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH TERRORISTS AND, ALTHOUGH CHARGES OF PROVIDING SHELTER FOR TERRORISTS HAD BEEN DISMISSED, GOC COULD HAVE BROUGHT OTHER CHARGES AGAINST HER BUT DID NOT IN DEFERENCE TO HMG. NOTE CONCLUDED BY STATEING IT IS NOT SURPRISING CASSIDY HAS JOINED COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILE BUT IT IS SURPRISING AND LAMENTABLE THAT HMG GIVES CREDENCE TO THE UNJUST ALLEGATIONS.

5. SANTIAGO PRESS HAS UNIFORMLY AND SHARPLY REJECTED CASSIDY ALLEGATIONS, LINKING THEM TO INTERNATIONAL MARXIST CONSPIRACY AGAINST CHILE.

6. COMMENT: GOC DENIAL AND PRESS HANDLING OF ALLEGATIONS WERE HARDLY UNEXPECTED AND, WE SUSPECT, FAR FROM CONVINCING TO OUTSIDERS.

7. AS TO GOC CLAIM THAT NO MENTION OF TORTURE HAD BEEN MADE WHILE CASSIDY WAS IN CHILE, UK CONSUL PREVIOUSLY INFORMED EMBOFF THAT CASSIDY HAD COMPLAINED OF TORTURE DURING HIS FIRST VISIT AND HMG HAD SUBSEQUENTLY MADE CONSCIOUS DECISION NOT TO RAISE ISSUE UNTIL SHE WAS OUT OF CHILE. BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICERS ALSO HAD SAID CASSIDY SIGNED STATEMENTS UNDER DURESS, IN SENSE THAT SHE WOULD HAVE SIGNED ANYTHING IF IT HAD MEANT HER FREEDOM.

8. FON MINISTER'S NOTE PROVIDES FIRST INDICATION THAT CASSIDY MADE "EXTENSIVE AND USEFUL STATEMENTS" THAT PERMITTED AUTHORITIES TO RECONSTRUCT WHAT HAD HAPPENED DURING FLIGHT OF MIR FUGITIVES AND HAD LED TO DETENTION OF OTHERS WHO ASSISTED THEM. UK EMBASSY OFFICERS DID NOT TELL US THAT CASSIDY HAD DISCLOSED INFORMATION LEADING TO APPREHENSION OF OTHERS. HER STATEMENTS TO UK PRESS, AS REPORTED HERE, MAKE IT CLEAR THAT SHE DID TALK, UNDER DURESS.

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